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WOMEN IN CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT: GENDER EQUITY IN CHANGING PRODUCTION PATTERNS

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INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to contribute to assessments of the participation of women in the economic and social development of the Caribbean in recent years. This assessment takes place in the context of the proposal of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) concerning changing production patterns with social equity.

The mandate to assess the participation of women in light of the above proposal was given by the Eleventh Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held at Varadero, Cuba, on 19 and 20 November 1990. The document will be presented for consideration by member States at the Fifth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Section I reviews major elements of the ECLAC proposal on production patterns and social equity relevant to an assessment of the situation of women in the Caribbean subregion. Section II highlights gender aspects of economic and social production in selected areas. Section III reviews and analyses a number of strategies towards implementation of the ECLAC proposal in the subregion and goes into some detail with regard to strategies already embarked upon in concrete ways.

The review is done from a gender-analysis perspective. Data presented in the tables have been drawn only from official statistics available to the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee of ECLAC (ECLAC/CDCC). The choice of selected member States for the illustration of certain points made in the document has been determined by the availability to ECLAC/CDCC of relevant information at the time of preparing the document.

I. CHANGING PRODUCTION PATTERNS WITH SOCIAL EQUITY

The ECLAC proposal entitled Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity stimulates a re-thinking of economic and social development, following the failure of old developmental efforts in the region to achieve their objectives in the 1970s and 1980s.

At that time, economic development strategies in the region were mainly inward-looking and national in character. Although some growth did occur in the region, such growth did not filter down to include larger segments of the population. It is widely acknowledged that the region is currently moving towards a different pattern of development and that there is a need to guide the direction which development will take in the region during the 1990s and beyond.

The new proposal was adopted by member States of ECLAC at its twenty-third session, held in Caracas, Venezuela, on 3-11 May 1990. It is based on the determination that the economic system should grow in strength without leaving the social system lagging behind. To this end economic growth should go hand in hand with improvement of living conditions for the entire population in a context of social equity.

Economic growth should be pursued by taking an outward-looking rather than an inward-looking approach and by a concerted effort to combine competitiveness with collaboration and cooperation of ECLAC member States in the varied areas of their economic activities. Social equity should be promoted through participation of people on the broadest possible basis.

The integrated efforts of the economic and social system should include the absorption of technological progress by the production process, the pursuit of healthy competition, the development of human resources, the adoption of broad tax bases and the use of selective, positive State intervention.

The ultimate objective is to raise productivity. Towards this end the thrust is to harness the market in a context of macroeconomic balance to improve investment and savings levels, increase international and national competitiveness, technological advancement and use of technology. It is contended that both enterprises and people can adapt to new patterns and improve by

doing so. It really poses a challenge to governments and people in the region and deserves an effort by all.

In a democratic, pluralistic and participatory context, both men and women, young and old, rich and poor should help to shape the new directions of the region. In this context it is therefore assumed that social equity implies gender equity. However, the 1980s provide no evidence that such a situation existed. Rather, in the Caribbean, policies to overcome the economic downturn have been implemented without adequate consultation with those who would be affected, and in the subregion these were mainly women. The majority of adult women are the de facto economic and social providers for their families. As a result the economic recession and its impact on the social system has engendered a feminization of poverty and social misery.

The recognition of women's unequal position in society as compared to the more advantageous position of men has been a major concern in the 1970s and 1980s. During the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), the situation of inequality, for example with regard to access to the labour market, income, education, health services, decision-making, ownership of property, was addressed through strategies which would incorporate women into development. These strategies have been implemented mainly in the context of women in development programmes and projects.

Strategies included training for enhancing job skills and income, improvement of maternal and child care, population control, family life education, legislative reform and promoting access to decision-making positions. In other words, the emphasis has been on women. Although strides have been made in redressing inequalities in some areas, little change has taken place in terms of societal perceptions of women and women's perceptions of themselves.

Perceptions are directly related to human relations. It is on the issue of relations that the gender and development approach tries to focus. Gender refers to the relationship among human beings. Recognizing the relationship as the fundamental issue rather than the situation of one or the other sex means that a new focus for strategies may be adopted.

An important notion of the gender and development approach is the recognition that gender relations are socially constructed and not biologically determined. This means that changes are possible. The concept furthermore contends that gender relations may be relations of power and that race, ethnicity and class also interfere as conditioning factors in such relations.

A gender approach to development alternatives in the 1980s might have arrested the expansion of feminization of economic and social poverty. As such an approach was not taken, the once strong Caribbean women have seen their survival alternatives disappear in

economic models which reduced their levels of participation as well as their capacity to give direction as agents of development. Small wonder that the 1980s have marked the raising of women's voices claiming equal rights to participation. The voices have been heard, but claims have been honoured mainly in cosmetic ways.

II. A GENDER ANALYSIS

A. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PRODUCTION

Conditioned by a history of struggle, women in the Caribbean continue to fight their way to survival, attempt to improve living conditions and promote advancement as people and as agents of development with the strength that has always characterized these women. This strength is also derived from the historical role of females as transmitters of culture.

As noted before, the majority of adult women in the subregion are de facto the sole economic and social providers for their families. Female-headed households, as such families are referred to in the census statistics and in the literature, are not new. A note of caution is fitting here in terms of the interpretation of the term female-headed household, as statistical surveys utilize specific definitions. In practice, the structure of a unit that constitutes a family in most islands of the Caribbean is basically a man, a woman and children. The man and the woman are not necessarily married. As regards the permanent composition of a family unit, there are many de facto variations, of which so-called "visiting relationships" and common law marriages are the most prevalent.[1] Among the population of African descent, for example, a family unit comprised of women and children has been the prevailing pattern since the period of enslavement and plantation society. Economic and social conditions including characteristics of Caribbean gender relations have only contributed to the prevalence of the pattern.

Except perhaps for an élite minority, women in the age group 15-45, whether from the less or the more fortunate social classes, work in production and reproduction, be it as paid workers, on their own account or as unpaid workers. As women have always been part of the development process in Caribbean society, they may be crucial agents in the process of transformation of patterns of production and organization in development. In this regard, women's contributions to cultural beliefs and practices need to be considered and utilized in the planning of transformations towards increased productivity in the region. Women's participation in some sectors of economic and social development in the Caribbean is briefly reviewed in the following paragraphs.

B. GENDER EQUITY

Employment and income

As regards participation in economic activities in general, data on selected countries reveal that in relation to male participation female participation is highest in the age group 25-29, as table 1 illustrates. Although the male-female relation appears negative for females in the Dominican Republic, as shown in the same table, recent studies indicate that the proportional relation has almost been reversed. Different production patterns and the new industrial focus in recent development projects are drawing more women than men into the labour market.

Figures from Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles and Suriname illustrate proportionate earnings and income differentials in tables 2, 3 and 4.

In recent years women have been more visible in certain sectors of the Caribbean economy than in others. Certain sectors in which women are increasingly prominent, and which are particularly relevant to the ECLAC proposal on changing production patterns with social equity, namely, the public service, agriculture, the informal sector of trade, export-oriented industry and the services sector, are discussed below.

Public service

In some member States administrative posts in the public service have been the domain of women. For many women, employment in the public service has been accessible on ethnic and racial grounds, and it also represents stability of income. The presence of women is further reflected in other areas of the public service such as health, education and community service.

The sectors of health, education and community service may also need some degree of transformation in order to contribute to the overall level of rising productivity in the subregion. Transformations do not necessarily imply loss of jobs. More effective use of resources, both capital and human, in consultation with all involved may benefit the whole population.

Maternity leave regulations, an achievement of the labour movement, have helped to keep women in the public service in most member States. In the Netherlands Antilles women used to be required to leave the public service upon marriage. Legal reform in 1983 introduced a change in this area of discrimination against female public servants. Until the passing of the relevant bill on female public servants, figures on female participation in this sector were low compared to other member States in the subregion.

Table 1

FEMALE PARTICIPATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF MALE PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN SELECTED COUNTRIES BY AGE (1985)

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44
Cuba	15.0	46.4	51.7	52.2	51.4	48.3
Dominican Republic	9.3	16.3	16.0	16.1	16	16.1
Guyana	20.4	38.3	34.7	31.3	28.4	28.0
Haiti	46.9	61.6	62.8	61.9	63.6	64.3
Jamaica	38.3	83.0	88.1	87.9	87.8	87.4
Suriname	9.6	36.6	38.0	39.2	39.3	38.1

Source: United Nations, Demographic Yearbook, 1987 (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.R/17), New York, 1989. United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.88.XIII.1.

Table 2

EMPLOYMENT AND AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME BY SECTOR AND SEX IN CURAÇAO (1988)

(In Netherlands Antilles guilders (NA f.))

Industry	Males employed	Average monthly male wage	Female employed	Average monthly female wage	Women's average wage as a % of men's wage
Agriculture and mining	127	1 780	7	1 984	111.5
Manufacturing	2 503	2 510	331	1 627	64.8
Utilities	779	2 425	68	1 961	80.8
Construction	1 385	1 491	65	1 503	100.1
Trade, hotel, restaurants	2 523	1 390	2 474	867	62.4
Transport/communication	724	2 094	196	1 693	80.8
Financial services	1 090	1 953	2 143	1 495	76.5

Source: Statistical Digest, 1988, Netherlands Antilles.

Table 3

MALE-FEMALE INCOME DIFFERENTIALS IN THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

(In Netherlands Antilles guilders (NA f.))

Gross monthly Income	Male	Female	Female per 100 male
0-500	2 548	4 678	183
501-1 000	8 683	8 112	93
1 001-2 000	12 474	7 256	58
2 001-3 000	5 264	2 541	48
3 001-4 000	2 362	759	32
4 001-5 000	1 443	278	19
5 000+	1 576	51	3
TOTAL	34 350	23 675	69

Source: Statistical Digest, 1988 and Statistical Digest, 1989, Netherlands Antilles.

NA = St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, Saba, Bonaire and Curaçao.

Table 4

INCOME DIFFERENTIALS BY SEX FOR SURINAME

Gross income	Male	Female	Female per 100 male
0-200	5 974	6 201	104
200-400	20 238	6 173	31
400-750	13 731	5 525	40
750-1 250	6 208	1 964	30
1 250-2 500	2 131	235	11
over 2 500	674	37	5
Total employed	58 028	22 701	

Source: Statistical Digest, 1988, Netherlands Antilles.

It has been argued that the size of the public sector has been the main hindrance to the achievement of optimum efficiency and productivity. In trying to find a solution to this problem, the relationships between efficiency, productivity and manpower should be analysed together with other factors which have an impact on these three main elements. Some member States have tried to analyse the situation with a view towards improving the level of efficiency and productivity. For example, they have considered rationalizing the portfolio system. The question here, however, is whether this exercise can be carried out rationally and with gender-sensitive methods. In other words, is every right man or woman in the right place? This question cannot be separated from the existing rules and regulations which govern the administrative structure of the public sector. If such a transformation does take place, it is important that it be preceded by consultation and dialogue throughout the system, and with those to be affected in particular. The process of decision-making with the aim of achieving higher levels of efficiency and productivity in the public sector needs to be guided by a social equity and gender-sensitive approach.

Agriculture

Agriculture is still an important source of income in many member States. In general governments are committed to strengthening the domestic agricultural sector. Concern with the status of rural women has become a critical issue on the agenda of several member States. It has been recognized that gender issues need to be incorporated into the agricultural development agenda, as women participate at practically all levels of the farm sector. In Trinidad and Tobago for example, the number of professional female agriculturists has risen significantly in recent years as the proportion of female enrolment in agricultural studies at the University of the West Indies increases (Phillip, 1987). The trend towards a different gender balance at decision-making levels might well influence future changes in production patterns in this sector to the benefit of both economic growth and social equity.

Non-governmental organizations have been rather active in the subregion. In the Dominican Republic some non-governmental organizations have underscored the need to address issues concerning the rural population and have developed specific projects for women. The Research Centre for Feminist Action (CIPAF) in the Dominican Republic has published popular education material targeting rural women. This organization has also spearheaded training courses on research methods and techniques for participatory investigations with regard to rural women. The content of the courses was linked to agrarian reform and other rural issues and experiences in Central and South America.

The Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) has recently completed a project on Women in Caribbean Agriculture, featuring the participation of women in economic and

social rural production in the Commonwealth of Dominica and in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The preliminary results of the action-oriented research are not only contributing to increased visibility of gender relations in rural production but also pointing to a process of empowerment of women in this sector.

Although official statistics indicate a higher male participation in rural production, the literature reviewed suggests that many women in the age group of approximately 30 years or more work in agriculture. In the Eastern Caribbean they are cultivators of root crops and green vegetables on small lots, and in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago women in that age group are at work in sugar cane production. In the same age group they may be identified in banana production, especially in Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Subsistence agriculture in small home gardens is not new in the subregion. It is interesting to observe in, for example, Trinidad and Tobago that many individuals who had abandoned planting since the oil boom years are planting their gardens again. It is increasingly necessary for women to ensure a level of basic food supply for the family through subsistence farming.

At present, accessible data on people's participation in agricultural production, living conditions of the rural population and gender aspects of economic and social production in the rural sectors are limited. It is important to give more attention to the agricultural sector in the subregion, where for example the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD) is already breaking new ground.

A quick review of the agricultural sector shows that a gender analysis of rural economic and social production patterns in the Caribbean is imperative for an adequate assessment of the situation of women in agriculture and for the purpose of planning effective strategies. Except for a few published reports, which are very general in nature, gender-analytic information on rural production in the subregion is poor. However, the development plans of several member States indicate concern with rural production and the living conditions of the rural population.

In view of the need to raise productivity in this sector, thereby incorporating a wide spectrum of the rural-based population into the effort, it is important for research also to explore ways in which such incorporation can be most effective in safeguarding social equity, particularly gender equity.

The informal sector of trade

A significant change in production patterns observed in recent times is the shift from seeking an income in the formal sector

towards seeking an income in the informal or "hustling" economy. The most visible group in this activity is women.

In the framework of its Women and Development Programme, the ECLAC/CDCC office in Port of Spain has designed databases to gather research data on inter-island traders in agricultural products. The quantitative data focuses on several characteristics of the inter-island traders, on aspects of the trade and of the trading activity cycle. Reports can be generated on research data collected and entered in the databases.

Quantitative data on the informal sector of trade are scarce, owing to the specific nature of informal-sector operations. Nevertheless, the accessible quantitative and qualitative data allow us to approximate an assessment of recent developments.

Most activities in this parallel economy are outward-oriented, which in itself should represent a positive change in production patterns, and hence in trade. In fact, parallel trading in certain products has stimulated competition both nationally and regionally.

Informal traders in manufactured goods, often referred to as "suitcase traders", patronize free trade zones in, for example, Curaçao and Panama. They also visit other islands and countries in the region, buying and selling fashionable or scarce commodities.

Informal traders in fresh agricultural products control approximately 98% of the inter-island agricultural trade in fruits, vegetables and ground provisions. Their movements are mainly from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada to Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados or from Dominica to Guadeloupe and Martinique.

The activity of the higglers or independent commercial importers (ICIs) of Jamaica, Madames Sara of Haiti, and the traders of Guyana and other countries in the region has been analysed and described in several ECLAC/CDCC studies and by individual researchers in the region. Some results have been discussed with traders' associations, where these exist, and with national and regional non-governmental development agencies with regard to their relevance to the traders and to participation in follow-up actions.

The informal trade sector has been limited in terms of the introduction of new technologies. However, the pattern of activity calls for fast turnovers, whereby money and capital move and circulate rapidly. This implies that there is more productivity per unit of capital. Capital is small and used intensively. The productivity output is relatively high per unit of input. Savings are invested and spent quickly. Investments are usually made to expand the trade and occasionally to acquire property. Expansion of the trade has so far not considered the introduction of new technologies. Quick spending on non-durable consumer goods is the main pattern. Extending the area of trade beyond the region has

been considered by a few male traders but hardly at all by women, who represent the majority of traders.

Benefits for national economies include the impact on banking, exports, local transport, regional aviation, airport taxes, customs and other revenues, and employment for carriers, loaders, middle men and truckers.

The significantly changed pattern of production with regard to trading manufactured goods and agricultural products in the subregion has to some extent positively impacted on social equity concerns. A wide range of people benefit from the incomes accrued through each participant in the informal trade. But also, each informal trader that enters the trade is not only one poor person less but one more person with a potential to grow and contribute to growth. Development agencies and governments intervening in this sector might consider the potentials it has to contribute to productivity levels in the region.

For no immediately explainable reason the suitcase trade has always been mainly the domain of women. This is different in the case of the inter-island agricultural trade. The inter-island trade has historically been dominated by men, and in the last two or three decades by women; more recently, men are increasingly appearing on the scene again.

Female traders combine productive and reproductive roles, a situation which, as some studies have shown (ECLAC, 1987) has taken its toll on the lives of many women. Both the suitcase trade and the agricultural trade require long hours on the job and involve heavy, strenuous physical inputs in addition to constant exposure to harassing and denigrating attitudes and perceptions.

Gender relations in the agricultural trade tend to be more relaxed and supportive than in the suitcase trade. In many cases male partners or relatives of female agricultural traders assist actively, for example, in packaging goods or arranging for entry visas, required permits and other administrative needs which would otherwise take too much time from the trader's activity cycle. There is caring and sharing at the home base generally. It may be that common interests, historical attachment to land or direct affinity to the products of trade might be contributing factors to guarantee that at least at the home base the trader does not suffer effects of gender domination. It is not clear whether the same holds for the suitcase trader, who is much more alienated from the product of her trade and needs to move around much more and more often in order to identify what might sell on the market.

The so-called "barrel economy" of Guyana and "pakket (parcel) economy" of Suriname, whereby goods move from relatives in the United States of America to Guyana and similarly from the Netherlands to Suriname has not yet received much attention in the

existing literature. Its significance in serving consumption needs and controlling the social effects of scarcity should not be underestimated. It has been suggested that in Suriname approximately 10 million Netherlands guilders' (approximately five million United States dollars') worth of remittances in kind are involved. In Guyana approximately 50% of families receive on average one barrel every two months. A barrel is a round, strong, thick cardboard container measuring approximately four feet high by two feet wide. Relatives in the United States fill the barrel with a variety of consumer goods over a period of time and ship the barrel to relatives in Guyana.

There is no indication of specific involvement of women or benefits for women as compared to men; rather it appears that relatives at both the donating and receiving sides, whether male, female, young or old, collaborate to address the situation where it affects the living conditions of some. Certain aspects of the quality of human resources are maintained through this overseas support system. The whole question of female involvement needs attention, however. In Suriname, for example, during the situation of warfare in the interior of the country which has existed for some time, women have undertaken trade ventures to the camps in French Guiana for the purpose of supplying goods and services to the Surinamese bush Negro population, who had to leave their villages and have been relocated in French Guiana. Women traders travel by bus, cross rivers by boat and walk long distances to reach the camps where they supply goods which are culturally basic to the bush Negroes and unavailable in their place of relocation. Again, the interaction of the economic, the social and the cultural spheres occurs in the everyday practice of people's lives. These matters need to be considered in the context of macro policies and strategies as well for the sake of seriously seeking effective transformations.

Industry

Industrialization by import substitution was limited by the saturation of small domestic markets in the Caribbean. Further to that experience, the potential of tourism to accelerate industrial development through agro-industries and light manufacturing in arts and crafts was aborted as tourists instead created a substantial demand for imported goods. Many economies turned their attention to industrial production for export.

Industry has not been a sector of major employment for females in the Caribbean. The textile and apparel industries have been the main branches in which women have been employed in this sector. However, since the establishment of export processing zones, the female share in industrial employment has increased drastically. To what extent the export processing zone operations are in fact to be considered part of the industrial production of the relevant countries where they establish themselves is a subject of debate.

The experience in the Caribbean has been that the factories offer employment mainly to young women (age group 15-25) and that the duration of these operations in the country is temporary. Assembly operations include low-skilled stages of manufacture such as electronic devices, computer memories, sporting goods, and services such as routine data entry. The high figures appearing for female participation in industry in selected countries (see table 5) may well reflect this recent trend.

Table 5

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN EMPLOYED IN SELECTED INDUSTRIAL BRANCHES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES (1980/1988/1989/1990)

(Percentages)

Industrial branch	Dominican Republic	Jamaica	Curaçao	Suriname	Trinidad and Tobago
Agriculture and forestry	11.8	24.0	5.0	11	20
Mining	12.1	11.0	5.0	4	9
Manufacturing	28.1	30.0	11.0	13	30
Construction	2.3	2.0	4.5	5	8

Source: Clara Báez, Mujeres como beneficiarias de servicios financiados por recursos asignados en el presupuesto nacional de la Republica Dominicana (LC/CAR/R.215), Port of Spain, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, 1987; and Statistical Yearbook of Jamaica, 1989.

For purposes of the ECLAC proposal, it seems difficult to analyse this form of industrialization for the following reasons. First of all the main contribution of the recipient country is unskilled labour. Highly skilled stages of production, involving high levels of technological training, take place in the developed countries. Secondly, technological transfer is minimal, and thirdly, capital is foreign: it basically enters and leaves the country. In addition, all administrative, managerial, technical and commercial aspects of production are retained in the foreign country of origin of the companies.

However, this form of industrialization has proven itself as a catalyst in the creation of jobs, especially for the female population in a short space of time. It would take political will both on the side of the foreign companies and on the side of the recipient country to negotiate a transformation of production patterns which promotes the development of human resources and the possibility of the sector to contribute to increased productivity levels to the benefit of the recipient country's economy as well.

As stated before, this form of industrialization has had a tremendous impact on the employment of women. In this regard the Dominican Republic may be a record case. Between 1987 and 1989 the number of export processing zones rose to 325 in 25 industrial parks in more than 20 cities of the country and the number of jobs -mainly jobs for women- rose from 22 000 to 105 000 (Burgaud, 1990). This growth has led to feminization of industrial labour in the Dominican Republic, representing 50% of all industrial workers. The literature reviewed reveals, however, that the cost of living has risen, unemployment rates run higher, and women, who perhaps as a result of participation in the new economic model have become more integrated in public life either from an economic or political perspective, have organized themselves to work for better living conditions. Wages decreased over the same period of expansion of export processing zones, and in 1989 purchasing power was equivalent to 30% of wages in constant prices. National income distribution has narrowed, and rising unemployment and chronic underemployment have led to a deterioration in the quality of the labour market, owing to a decrease in the number of workers earning constant wages (Duarte and others, 1990 and Baez and Arregui, 1989).

Women should perhaps be encouraged to seek to enter skilled areas of work within the export processing zones which allow for upward mobility in the production process. It is significant to note that in cases where basic technology transfer has taken place recently, women have not been recruited to highly skilled posts such as those of technicians or engineers. Joint ventures with local firms might facilitate more local involvement and serve to mitigate the effects of dislocations when enterprises move to new locations.

The services sector

The services sector is the fastest growing sector in Caribbean economies. Economic and social services are increasingly absorbing the major portion of GDP in many CDCC member States. Tourism, which rises and falls with optimum service, has become the cornerstone of the economy in many member States in the subregion. In Aruba for example, tourism represented 30.3% of GDP in 1988, and this refers only to 68% of total tourism revenues (ECLAC, 1990c).

In the Netherlands Antilles, for example, 28% of employed persons in 1988 work in trade services, restaurants and hotels, 36% in community, social and personal services (Statistical Yearbook of the Netherlands Antilles, 1990). The recently growing intermediary service to trade between Europe and Latin America which is discussed later in this document is an interesting development which extends the scope of the service sector. Table 6 illustrates the significance of services in the Caribbean subregion. Perhaps women should be encouraged and prepared to seek their future in services.

Table 6

MAIN CONTRIBUTORS TO GDP IN SELECTED COUNTRIES, 1988/1989

Country	Main sector	Year
Aruba	Tourism	1988
Antigua and Barbuda	Hotels, restaurants and government services	1989 p
Barbados	Wholesale and retail; government services	1989
British Virgin Islands	Hotels/restaurants	1988
Cuba	Industry	1988
Dominica	Agriculture	1989
Guyana	Services and agriculture, forestry and fishing	1989
Haiti	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1988
Jamaica	Distributive trade and manufacturing	1989
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Government services and manufacturing	1988
Trinidad and Tobago	Mining and quarrying, distribution and restaurants	1990
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Government services and agriculture	1989

p = provisional.

The environment

In the wake of the region's move towards different patterns of production, further guidance is advanced in the ECLAC proposal to ensure that the new path towards development with social and gender equity is taken in a context of a livable environment. Every element and subject discussed in this document should be read in light of the need to increase productivity with social and gender equity in sustainable livelihood for the people of this subregion.

At a brainstorming meeting on the environment, held in Barbados on 23-24 May 1990, it was agreed that sustainable development is development which can be sustained by the poor and that livelihood means "identifying and mobilizing the resources and relationships, economic and non-economic, that enable people to affirm self-worth while supporting their capacities for economic survival".

In the Caribbean the livelihoods of women and communities dependent on coastal and marine resources are jeopardized by toxic waste dumping and the cleaning of oil tankers at sea. Water supplies, marine life, beaches and tourism facilities in coastal

zones are placed at risk of chemical contamination. Community livelihood is further affected by coastal and marine destruction (loss of coral reefs, marine species, wetlands, mangroves) and hurricanes in the subregion.

In Suriname, for example, 95% of the territory is forest, of which 90% is in fact primary forest. The coastal area, which is where 90% of the population lives, however, presents an environmental degradation problem. In agriculture the problem is mainly related to the effect of pesticides on soil and waterways. The industry has deposited residues on land and in rivers. These situations are affecting livelihood in a serious way. Efforts are being made by the government to integrate environmental issues into sectoral development planning.

Women and children in the Caribbean are especially vulnerable to the consequences of inadequate directions for use, improper use, storage, transportation and disposal of pesticides. Women employed in extractive industries such as bauxite and petrochemical operations in the subregion should be protected by special occupational safety provisions on the grounds of the vulnerability of their reproductive capacity.

For the maintenance of a sustainable quality of human resources in order to impel the subregional economies towards higher productivity, due consideration should be given to the impact of environmental degradation on women, who are the main reproducers of life.

On the other hand it is important for policy-making and planning to take place from a gender-based perspective, considering the crucial role which women play in shaping societal values and attitudes towards the environment.

III. STRATEGIES

In the framework of the ECLAC proposal for changing production patterns with social equity, primary consideration has been given to training and retraining of human resources, regional integration and selected avenues towards increased productivity within the context of environmentally sustainable development.

Human resource development has been identified as an area of special concern. In examining some efforts to advance human resource development in the subregion, the following section focuses on the relevant gender issues.

A. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

In the face of deteriorating development perspectives and diminishing productive contributions from its population, the Caribbean has identified its people as a priority factor of capital for the development of the region in the 1990s and beyond. Human resource development has been given top priority in regional development efforts at the highest levels, which include the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Independent West Indian Commission created by this Meeting, the Caribbean Regional Economic Conference, held in Trinidad and Tobago on 27 February-1 March 1991, the Bourne report Caribbean Development to the Year 2000 (Bourne, 1988), which served as a preamble to the Conference, and the University of the West Indies.

The Tenth Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM adopted a resolution to pursue human resource development in the subregion. It established and mandated the Independent West Indian Commission to examine the situation which confronts the development of the West Indies in the 1990s. This examination on the future of the West Indies has taken place in a process of consultation at the broadest level throughout the region, which the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable A.N.R. Robinson, proposed should be "... a process by which our region becomes a public forum on the future".

The Caribbean Regional Economic Conference agreed on development strategies for the subregion, which include human

resource development, preservation of democratic traditions and processes, outward-looking international trade and subregional cooperation and outreach to the wider Caribbean, Latin America and the Western hemisphere.

The University of the West Indies emphasized the need for human resource development in its 1990-2000 10-year plan targeting increased enrolment of students at the university over that period.

Human resources are a factor of capital. Assuming that they should contribute significantly to capital growth, it is recognized that their capacity to do so should be optimal. Their capacity depends on adequate education and skills training but also on access to and utilization of services which will provide more satisfactory living conditions. From this perspective, efforts to improve human resources should grant special attention not only to education and training, but also to labour, income and the health and social welfare of Caribbean citizens.

Education and training

In fact, looking ahead to the year 2000, Caribbean governments have turned most human resource development strategies so far towards education and skills development. As a result, this element of human resource development strategies has been most extensively studied. The target population has been the age group 15-44, as table 7 illustrates for selected countries.

Special attention to the female segment of that age group has been limited, although evaluations made during the United Nations Decade for Women have shown that such attention is necessary in some areas. Certain conditioning factors such as the feminization of poverty in the region, the multiple productive and reproductive tasks assigned to and assumed by women, and for which they have been socialized, are impediments to gender and social equity.

Education and training programmes which facilitate human resource development, although they do not single out women for special programmes, are provided at both formal and non-formal levels.

Formal education

There is general consensus on the need for education as a vehicle to improve contributions of human resources to the production process and generate incomes for both men and women. In the Caribbean in general, formal education is available to all, regardless of sex. Table 8 illustrates female participation rates in selected countries.

Table 7

RESOURCES CAPACITY AND TARGETED POPULATION FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT BY SEX FOR THE 1990s *

(In thousands)

Country	Year	Total human resource capacity			Targeted population		
		Total population	Total males	Total females	Total targeted population	Males 15-44	Females 15-44
Cuba	1985	9 946	5 066	4 880	4 955	2 528	2 427
	1990	10 324	5 428	5 076	5 335	2 724	2 611
	1995	10 788	5 472	5 316	5 377	2 727	2 650
Dominican Republic	1985	6 416	3 260	3 156	2 979	1 516	1 463
	1990	7 170	3 644	3 526	3 409	1 737	1 672
	1995	7 915	4 023	3 892	3 805	1 941	1 846
Guyana	1985	953	478	476	458	230	229
	1990	1 040	522	218	523	263	260
	1995	1 119	562	557	583	296	287
Haiti	1985	5 922	2 905	3 017	2 529	1 265	1 327
	1990	6 504	3 192	3 312	2 912	1 425	1 487
	1995	7 148	3 511	3 637	3 241	1 590	1 651
Jamaica	1985	2 336	1 157	1 179	1 074	534	540
	1990	2 521	1 253	1 268	1 239	622	617
	1995	2 706	1 348	1 357	1 389	704	685
Puerto Rico	1985	3 451	1 680	1 771	1 600	773	827
	1990	3 709	1 806	1 903	1 725	843	882
	1995	3 958	1 928	2 030	1 831	903	928
Suriname	1985	375	186	189	172	84	88
	1990	403	200	203	195	96	99
	1995	435	216	220	214	106	108
Trinidad and Tobago	1985	1 188	591	594	582	290	292
	1990	1 283	640	643	636	318	318
	1995	1 385	690	695	688	345	343

Source: United Nations, Global Estimates and Projections of Population by Sex and Age. The 1988 Revision (ST/ESA/SER.R/93), New York, 1989.

* Projections according to medium variant.

Table 8

FEMALE STUDENTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF MALE STUDENTS ACCORDING TO LEVELS OF ENROLMENT IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

(Percentages)

Country	1st and 2nd level Nursery, primary and secondary		3rd level Technical/vocational/ university	
Bahamas	106.3	(1985)	NA	
Belize	95.3	(1981-82)	112.0	(1980)
Cuba	96.0	(1980)	87.0	(1980)
Dominican Republic	100.0	(1980)	85.0	(1980)
Guyana	95.0	(1980)	88.0	(1980)
Haiti	85.0	(1980)	38.0	(1980)
Jamaica	104.0	(1980)	76.0	(1980)
Netherlands Antilles (A, B and C)	102.5	(1981-1982)	NA	
Puerto Rico	NA		NA	
Suriname	93.3	(1984-primary only)	NA	
Trinidad and Tobago	99.7	(NA)	144.0	(NA)

Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/Regional Office for Science and Technology for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROSTLAC), UNESCO/ROSTLAC - STP Directory. Institutions Carrying out Planning, Coordination or Research Activities Related to Scientific and Technological Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1990, Montevideo, 1989; and 1980 census for some countries.

Since 1980 a general trend towards more participation by females has been observed in primary education. Attention should be drawn, however, to the actual achievements of students. The fact that students are enrolled does not necessarily mean that they successfully complete the education programmes.

Only a limited number of students writing the Common Entrance Examination are placed in secondary schools.[2] This is because secondary school places are limited. In 1987 in Jamaica for example, 46 058 students wrote the Common Entrance Examination and only 9 812 were awarded a place in secondary schools (Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica, 1987). In the same year in Saint Lucia approximately 5 000 students wrote the exam and only 1 385 were placed in secondary schools (Annual Statistical Digest, 1989).

The trend towards higher female participation does not continue at the secondary level in all countries. Female participation has to some extent been limited as a result of the high incidence of teenage pregnancies in the Caribbean. In many instances girls who become pregnant and have not completed school are either expelled from school or voluntarily drop out. As a result, some attempts have been made to promote continuing education facilities for such girls. In the case of adolescent mothers, the programmes of the Woman's Centre in Jamaica are an example of this effort. On the other hand, although the number of male students exceeds that of female students in general, female enrolment rates exceed male rates, in some countries.

Subsequent to the completion of the ECLAC studies on women in development and planning in 1989, further research has shown that in the Dominican Republic 55% of all secondary school students between 1984 and 1986 were female.[3] Contrary to the experience in other parts of the subregion, the trend in the Dominican Republic towards equal and even higher participation of females compared to males at secondary level continues. It seems that the progressive deterioration of the education system in the country, as evidenced by the results of recent studies, has affected female enrolment neither at this level nor at other educational levels.

The question of successful completion of school is an important consideration at the secondary level. The number of students completing primary school constitutes a limited percentage of the number of students entering secondary school. In Guyana, for example, an average[4] of 20% of students who wrote the examinations of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)[5] during the period 1985-1989 actually passed.[6]

Few secondary schools in the English-speaking Caribbean have introduced training courses in motor mechanics and construction trades in recent years. Initially most of these courses were closed to women in Trinidad and Tobago. It is only very recently that some of the courses have been opened for female participation.

However, enrolment for training in non-traditional female subjects is still very low. Registrations to write the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) examinations illustrate this fact. In metal work for example, 3 female students (compared to 668 male students) wrote the 1989 examination. Similar proportions maintain for woodworking: 21 to 976; building technology, 15 to 185; electrical engineering technology, 12 to 224; and mechanical engineering technology, 7 to 230. With respect to traditional courses, however, the opposite obtains: typewriting, 5 743 to 376 and clothing and textiles, 981 to 17.[7] In countries like the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, achievement of gender equity in education and in the economy continues to be hampered by the stereotyped choices which boys and girls continue to make in their further education.

At the tertiary level, enrolment of women in technical faculties at universities and in study programmes at technical institutes is comparatively lower than that of men. At the Faculty of Engineering women constituted only 12% of the students (Statistical Yearbook of Jamaica, 1988). On the other hand, at the Faculty of Arts and General Studies throughout the University of the West Indies more than 70% of students were female. A similar picture appears when examining the situation in the Dominican Republic, where national experts suggest two explanations 1) the prevailing resistance on the job market to employ skilled females, as evidenced by the fact that male and female applicants with the same educational requirements are graded differently, and 2) the consequent resistance of more prestigious technical education institutions to admit women, as well as self-elimination of women, both from attempting registration at higher technical schools and from the relevant job market. Yet, paradoxically, the shortage of technicians in the industrial sector has been evaluated at 313 406 persons for the period 1988-1992.[8]

It is, however, noteworthy that the trend of a larger and larger female student population at the universities in the region continues. In the Dominican Republic this is considered one of the major characteristics of the 1980s in the Dominican school system. At the university in Jamaica, 56% of graduates in 1988 were female.

Technical and vocational training

While women have not been equal beneficiaries of technical and vocational programmes at secondary and higher-level formal institutions, some training in traditional vocational areas such as sewing, cooking and typing has been provided in many countries of the region, often by community and church organizations. The level of training has perhaps allowed for some personal savings, but has not contributed to national productive development.

However, in some cases this type of training is provided by a business enterprise for the purpose of employment, as has sometimes

been the case at the Jamaica Women's League Allside Workroom for craft production, at the Women's Constructive Collective in Jamaica for construction work and at Grencoda Cooperative in Grenada for motor mechanics and metal work.

In terms of technical and vocational training at formal institutions, female participation is generally low. In Guyana, for example, 25.5% of students at technical/vocational institutes were female in 1986 and 23.4% were female at the Government Technical Institute. In Jamaica, male enrolment at the College of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST) far exceeds female enrolment.

The Trinidad and Tobago Management Development Centre has recognized that women are making inroads into management positions. In acknowledgement that women are not yet very comfortable in the management training programmes which the Centre offers, more programmes are being organized to encourage and persuade women to participate more. The experience of actual course attendance in recent years has been approximately 60% female attendance for courses for middle management, 50% for financial management courses (book keeping, budgeting and accounting) and 5.26% for top management courses. Other courses provided by the Centre, such as production management, marketing management, management of credit unions and cooperatives, management in industrial relations, hardly attract any female participants. The Centre concluded that the higher the managerial level of the course the lower the level of female participation. Until June 1991, participation in top management training was predominantly male.

Workers employed in education are the target group for training programmes of the "Servisio pa Konseho Edukashonal" (SEDUKAL) in Curaçao. Trainees in the teacher training programme are 90% female. SEDE ANTIYAS, an institution targeting the unemployed, provides technical training programmes including vocational training for women in traditional areas. Trade union organizations also offer special training programmes for women.

The "Stichting Wetenschappelijke Informatie" (SWI) in Suriname, in addition to providing research and information services, contributes to the development of human resources in Suriname through training seminars and discussion forums.

In Haiti, the Centre for the Advancement of Female Workers (CPFO), located in the heart of the export processing zone of Port-au-Prince, has reached out to scores of female factory workers, food vendors and others in the area with educational programmes on women's reproductive health, human development, literacy and functional literacy, legal rights and other issues of importance to the enhancement of the quality of the human being.

As a result of the deteriorated state of Caribbean economies and the inability of the formal private and public sectors to

absorb the available labour force, many individuals have resorted to "own-account" enterprises for self-sustenance. In many instances, however, they have little expertise and experience with regard to managerial functions.

As these workers comprise an important human resource for their own and for society's sustainable development, several organizations have addressed their limitations and have implemented training programmes. The Association for the Development of Micro-Enterprises (ADEMI) in the Dominican Republic has, for example, promoted micro-enterprises in the informal sector by providing credit and technical assistance to improve management and technical skills. Similarly, the Haitian Fund for Assistance to Women (FHAF) in Haiti has provided managerial assistance to low-income business women. Applicants for a loan must attend a six-week managerial training programme. Also in Haiti, training and financial assistance are given to both males and females working in the leather, wood, metal, tailoring and glass industries or in fisheries or construction under the Support of Initiatives of Economic and Social Self-Development Programme, conducted under the aegis of the International Labour Organisation's World Employment Programme.

Selected Caribbean experiences in the area of higher education include upgrading of the educational planning unit, attention to ethics and citizenship in tertiary education programmes and an effort towards the introduction of innovations (Barbados); mutual support of educational planning and economic planning (Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation for Development (CARNEID)); manpower planning and skills improvement as an integral part of growth in agriculture, tourism and industry (Saint Kitts and Nevis); recognition and action against brain drain and waste of brain power (Suriname); the development of an industry-university link, adaptation of new technology within the university and extensive manpower training to enhance competitiveness in the international market (Guyana).

In general, most Caribbean countries have recognized and promoted managerial training as a human resource development tool to facilitate optimization of the human resource factor.

The contribution of the women's movement

The Caribbean national focal points for women in development have been very active at the policy level in advocating and promoting the participation of women. In many member States these focal points have put mechanisms in place to ensure linkages among sectoral ministries and the work they do, for the benefit of the female population in relation to each sector.

There is a long tradition in the Caribbean of women organizing for the purpose of addressing issues of economic and social

development. In this regard their work has in general been supportive and complementary to the work of the national government machinery for women in development.

Many non-governmental organizations have also benefitted from the direction and assistance of government focal points. In some member States the focal points convene and organize seminars and workshops of various kinds in which women in non-governmental organizations participate as the main beneficiaries. In other member States seminars and workshops of non-governmental groups are supported by the government focal point.

In Trinidad and Tobago, for example, the government focal point organizes seminars and workshops which address themes such as project planning and management, financing of small projects, women and housing, health issues relevant to women, gender issues relevant to female professional executives and various others, all aiming at the enhancement of women's capacity to participate fully in the economic and social life of the country. The government focal points in Dominica, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago have organized several training activities as well and often invite the ECLAC/CDCC focal point on women in development to make substantive inputs.

In Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles the focal point usually supports the seminar and workshop activities of the steering committees of non-governmental organizations in the country.

Thus the women's movement has worked on many aspects of human resource development. Subjects in non-formal education and training by national women's organizations have included literacy (Curaçao, Suriname, Dominican Republic), continued education for teenage mothers (Jamaica), training for day-care workers (Curaçao), adult education (Curaçao), craftmaking (most member States), construction work (Jamaica), motor-mechanics (Grenada), food-processing (most member States), business management (Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago), cervical cancer screening (Suriname), counselling (Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia) and health (most member States).

At the regional level the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) has contributed significantly to training of women in research skills and creative writing.

These contributions by the women's movement in the Caribbean to the development of human resources in terms of education and training have enhanced female human resource capacities in the economic and social fields. Many women have become more assertive and confident as a result of their experiences in seminars and workshops.

There is a danger, however, that women who belong to women's organizations may continue to talk only among themselves. This concern is shared by a number of experts. It is noted, for instance, that -with few exceptions- professional women tend to stay away from participation in women's seminars and workshops and that very few NGO women are part of non-female-focused economic development or other technical forums. Some interpret the absence of professional women in women-focused forums as representing the female professional's fear of not being taken seriously by her male colleagues once she associates herself with the women's movement. This fear is sometimes disguised behind a certain degree of contempt towards activities which take place in the area of women's issues. Discussion of the matter has begun in the subregion, and those concerned are trying to find alternative strategies to close this gap so that all will benefit.

The women's movement has made a significant contribution to the improvement of the quality of female human resources. This aspect deserves some attention.

Quality of human resource

As mentioned earlier, the quality of human resources depends not only on education and skills but also and most importantly on satisfactory living conditions, which can be minimally guaranteed only if the population can easily have access to and utilize services which help to improve these conditions.

Health

In several member States the per capita budget allocation to health has decreased over the recent past. While allocations to health have generally been maintained at the same proportion of GDP, the quantity and quality of the health facilities and services provided has declined. In some member States there has been a reduction of staff and in others medical supplies have become more scarce (Jamaica Statistical Survey, 1987-1989). As a result of an increasing tendency in member States to provide maternal and child-care facilities along with family planning services and family life education programmes, women are the main recipients of health allocations.

Technical medical strides have no doubt been made in providing health services to women. There has been a great demand in the Caribbean to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancies. Programmes and services provided in some member States over the recent past have in fact contributed to a reduction of teenage pregnancies. In Saint Lucia for example, efforts in this regard have been particularly successful. Births to teenage mothers as a percentage of total births decreased from 26% in 1987 to 22% in 1989 (Economic and Social Review, 1989).

A significant rise in awareness and resultant use of family planning services may also be noted. In 1989, 39 000 more persons visited family planning centres in Jamaica than was the case in 1988.

In some respects the question of coverage is a concern. Screening services and the treatment of cancer among women have hardly reached the target population of women over 35. While this is the largest group affected by breast and cervical cancer, a 1988 survey revealed that the screening service is mainly provided in urban centres and is utilized primarily by young women.

Recent studies reveal an increasing incidence of diabetes and hypertension, often associated with obesity, among the middle-aged female population (Davies, 1986; Hinchcliffe, 1986; Scott, 1988; and READ, 1989). In 1988 the number of women affected by obesity was three times the number of men suffering from this problem according to studies in Jamaica and in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Caribbean Cooperation in Health Initiative, adopted at the CARICOM Ministers of Health Meeting in 1986, identified several priority areas for the Caribbean, among which special attention has been given to health systems and health services, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), maternal and child care and chronic non-communicable diseases. In the Caribbean, women have been in the vanguard of the NGO movement. Consequently women, through women's organizations and other non-governmental organizations, have been designated as agents to implement the strategies.

Child care

The Saint Vincent Save the Children Fund (VINSAVE), like other organizations in the subregion, has organized pre-schools for children, thus freeing their mothers to go out and earn a living. To this end VINSAVE provides financial assistance and training.

Occupational health

Much remains to be done with regard to the conditioning factors of certain patterns of production which are affecting women's health. There are still too many health hazards in some environments where women work many hours. In some member States, uncontrolled or inadequate control of the use of new technologies for applying pesticides in agricultural production, needs attention as well. Advanced technology exists which would eliminate adverse health effects in the production process, but the high costs involved often prevent its use in the region.

Furthermore, recent research findings are sending warning signals with regard to the effects on women's health of involuntary interventions in the reproductive system, such as Caesarean

sections without proper consultation with patients and/or objective assessment of need, involuntary sterilizations without consultation and acts of violence against women.

The high social cost of the "lost decade" of the 1980s included reductions in government expenditure on health, social security and welfare in most member States. As a result, the quality of life has deteriorated, particularly for women, who have had to carry the main burden of economic adjustments.

The increasing incidence of acts of violence against women in the region is alarming. It should be recognized that the capacity and quality of female human resources suffers significantly and that the effects last for a prolonged period of time because of the serious psychological connotations of such acts. In addition to the harm caused to the individual and her immediate environment, both her productive and reproductive contributions to development are at stake.

B. THE INTEGRATION PROCESS

The CARICOM region

While the 1980s have often been termed the "lost decade", there has been some success in integrating the Anglophone countries of the Caribbean subregion. These successes in the integration movement may be said to have had their origin in the 1960s and 1970s, when the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) and later CARICOM were instituted. CARIFTA, a free trade agreement among some Anglophone Caribbean member States, facilitated a certain degree of economic integration. This economic integration was further developed with the advent of the Caribbean Common Market and the Caribbean Community which comprised CARICOM. With the institution of CARICOM, several regional bodies were to be implemented. These would have included institutions such as the Caribbean Multilateral Clearing Facility (CMCF), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Caribbean Enterprise Regime (CER), the Caribbean Investment Corporation (CIC) and the Caribbean Food Corporation (CFC). While some of these institutions such as CFC and CER were never implemented, others either were disbanded, for example, the CIC, or collapsed, for example, CMCF during the 1980s. However, other institutions under the auspices of CARICOM developed and have had a significant measure of success during the decade. The examples of the Caribbean News Agency (CANA), the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) and the Caribbean Meteorological Organization (CMO) prove that the integration movement has survived the "lost decade", at least to the extent of functional cooperation. But integration was not limited to functional cooporation: the 1980s also saw the most positive

attempt at political integration with the case of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Although not yet politically integrated, by the end of the decade OECS will stand closest to showing the way to full integration at the governmental level.

Unity as experienced by West Indians is further promoted through the existence of a regional airline, British West Indian Airways (BWIA), a carrier which links the people of the West Indies and which West Indians experience as their own. The University of the West Indies (UWI), with campuses in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, contributes to this kind of connection as well. West Indians who enrol in tertiary education invariably develop a sense of oneness, a common basic ground as they relate to each other across campuses through their years of academic training. The West Indian Cricket Team is another such institution which links the hearts of West Indian people.

Several institutions which foster personal, family and professional linkages among West Indians are helping to establish a firm ground for cooperation, mutual respect and support in the productive and reproductive tasks of the West Indian community.

As the subregion moves into the 1990s, the process towards greater integration is being further enhanced by several developments. Among the CARICOM member States integration thrusts follow a new positive trend through, inter alia, increased economic and functional cooperation. In 1990, for instance, the Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians and the Caribbean Telecommunications Union were formalized. In 1991, a common External Tariff (CET) is being implemented in several CARICOM member States, while the existing three stock exchanges have started cross-country trading.

In recent times more and more interest is being expressed by non-CARICOM countries in institutionalizing collaboration and integration through membership or associate membership in the Community. Some countries have indeed obtained partial observer status in the context of the sectoral work of CARICOM.

The CDCC region

The governments in the wider Caribbean are linked through the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), a subsidiary body of United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The main objective of CDCC is to act as a coordinating body for activities relating to development in the Caribbean subregion.

Some non-governmental organizations, such as the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) have, through their manifold regional activities, united the peoples of the Anglophone and non-Anglophone countries of the region. This is also one of the important

characteristics of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA), which has also made some inroads in extending the geographical scope of its activities to countries in the subregion which are not members of CDCC, such as French Guiana, Guadeloupe and Martinique. In fact, the women's movement in general, through its struggle for gender equity at various levels of economic, social and political life, is contributing to several elements of the integration movements as well as to social equity in economic and social development in the Caribbean.

A recent feature which has opened up some parts of the subregion and has helped to augment information, knowledge and interest with regard to developments in the various member States is CARIBSCOPE, a television programme which captures images of national news items for viewing throughout the subregion. The inclusion of news and images from non-Anglophone countries of the region contributes significantly to a better understanding of the similarities and differences among member States. The recently launched, innovative radio programme "Caribbean Swizzle", which links up radio stations in Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia and other islands of the Eastern Caribbean by broadcasting music and entertainment programmes in the early morning, is another important initiative in the package of integration strategies which involve people directly.

The private sector has had a history of subregional economic activities linking up enterprises and entrepreneurs throughout the Caribbean. The private initiatives being taken in an atmosphere of increasing free trade and enterprise, and for some countries the establishment of a common external tariff rate, should help to augment the absorption of new technologies in the production process and stimulate subregional and international competition.

The potential of the above-mentioned institutional vehicles to make progress in the area of gender and social equity may well cushion the impact of economic developments in the private sector, so that a reasonable degree of social equity is maintained.

The Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC) is an umbrella regional private-sector organization of some importance. The objective of CAIC is to represent the regional interests of the Caribbean private sector to Caribbean governments and to advance members' interests through training, technical assistance and governmental business relations. CAIC includes members from the wider Caribbean region.

At the political level some CDCC member States such as the Dominican Republic, Haiti, the Netherlands Antilles and Suriname have observer status in some standing committees of CARICOM. The Netherlands Antilles often participates in activities at technical levels as well. The British Virgin Islands (BVI) has recently joined as an associate member of CARICOM.

Latin America - Caribbean integration

In Latin America there is a renewed political will to accelerate and consolidate integration among member States. New investments and modalities of action within existing cooperation schemes have been designed and adopted. For example, the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) pulls Latin American countries together to seek bilateral free-trade arrangements with the United States and Canada.

One of the recent manifestations of political will to integrate is the "Enterprise for the Americas" initiative of President Bush, designed to increase regional trade by reducing trade barriers and encouraging free-trade arrangements with individual countries or groups of countries.

It is hoped that the achievements of these various initiatives will benefit and enhance cooperation and integration with the Caribbean community.

Linguistic historical and other common factors have so far facilitated more intensive cooperation schemes between Latin America and Hispanic Caribbean countries as well as between Latin America and the Netherlands Antilles. The presence of Caribbean nations of various languages in CDCC might stimulate further integration of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Netherlands Antilles (Curaçao in particular) performs a bridge function, acting as intermediary for import and export negotiations between Europe and Latin America. Facilities are created to support related services such as trade shows and accommodation and servicing of trade missions —from Europe and Latin America. In order to keep improving the quality and scope of these services, organizations such as Curaçao Incorporated (CURINC) and Curaçao International Airport (CURINTA) have undertaken action for expansion and improvement of the airport facilities, among other actions. These developments are planned in order to expand the services provided by the Netherlands Antilles.

The Latin American Parliament, an organization of parliamentarians which is composed of 21 member States of Latin America, and of which Aruba, the Dominican Republic and the Netherlands Antilles are members as well, pursues integration through meetings and activities related to economic issues, communication, education and culture, human rights and political interests.

Governments and the private sector of Latin America and the Caribbean have regarded the integration process as an essential element for strengthening internal markets, inserting the countries into the global economy and strengthening the regional bargaining position vis-à-vis economic blocs in other areas of the world.

It is important that the levels of integration which are to be pursued in the 1990s allow for the creation or maintenance of adequate degrees of social equity. Absorption of new technologies and increased competition do not seem to promote social equity when addressed in isolation. Therefore it is imperative that social equity be continuously and systematically sought in the process of economic development. In this pursuit, social sector participation in the various elements of the integration thrust described above is necessary. Similarly, a greater knowledge and sensitivity on the part of economic agents with regard to social conditions in member States might bridge the gap which continues to separate two pillars of development which need to grow together.

Non-governmental organizations, the trade union movement, academia and the women's movement in particular have already provided inputs for the partnership and should continue towards consolidation of the relationship in concrete ways. However, the efforts will be futile if the economic partners are not prepared to make necessary concessions in the race for growth, to foster concrete openings for participation by social groups and to abandon lip service in the bargaining game for partnership.

The women's movement is particularly important, as it delivers a more complete proposal for equity which is not simply social but also includes the issue of gender relations. Equitable and thus healthier gender relations make for better social relations, fuller participatory capacities and therefore a more efficient economic system.

Recognition of gender and social inequity needs to be genuine. The social-sector assessments and gender analyses touched upon in this document point out the facts. Broad-based determination is needed —whether in the economic, political or social field, within or outside of government structures— to design and utilize instruments and modalities which genuinely foster social equity within the framework of concerted efforts towards the economic and social development of the Caribbean region.

A serious effort to follow the new development proposal implies, for example, that new technologies should not be introduced without first undertaking participatory studies and analyses of the technology in question and the known effects of its introduction in terms of maintaining social equity. There should be dialogue and bargaining to the extent possible and feasible, not only for the benefit of the social sector but perhaps even more for the longer-term benefit of the economic sector. The process of changing production patterns may be a long one through this approach, but so is the implication of democracy, pluralism and participation. We may not experience "booms" and consequently perhaps no sudden "downfalls". A longer road is seldom the fastest road, but it may be a better road, as there is more room and time for adjustments and changing gears as one advances.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The Caribbean subregion has already embarked on the implementation of strategies which envisage changes in production patterns. In this regard human resource development has been a major element of programmes and projects of governments and NGOs.

So far, attempts to achieve higher productivity levels with social equity have been hampered by the limited incorporation of gender-analysis in the process of decision-making and planning. The participation of women and recent shifts from male to female presence and vice versa in selected areas of Caribbean economies has been highlighted. Emphasis has been placed on women's crucial contribution as reproducers of life, particularly in relation to the need to create and maintain a sustainable quality of human resources and of the environment in which people live and work.

People's participation and related determining characteristics of race, ethnicity, class and gender are considered crucial in moving towards a new development path for the subregion. The training and development of human resources should have as their ultimate objective the enhancement of people's ability to take care of themselves. The importance of creating lasting opportunities for access to self-development can not be overemphasized. Only then will equity represent not charity but rather a lasting situation which allows people to survive at all times, whether the economy is booming or in a slump. In hard times it is difficult in any case for governments to provide social welfare so that people can survive. The political will to design adequate methods for ongoing dialogue, consultation and participation by the population in the process of necessary transformations needs to be supported by concerned efforts towards the implementation of these changes.

The integration process in the subregion, although hampered by past experiences, is well advanced and needs to be consolidated through the actual implementation of resolutions adopted in recent years. The concrete collaborative and integrative steps taken by the private sector, the women's movement and people at large are significant encouragements towards the realization of this strategy. Wider integration of the region as a whole is making progress as well, although confronted with certain limitations which, however, may not be insurmountable.

Notes

[1] Visiting relationships have been defined by Dr. H. Hoetink as a family unit consisting of a woman and her children and where a man passes by occasionally and may or may not co-habit at the residence of the unit for a certain period of time. A common law marriage constitutes a stable union in which man and a woman are not married.

[2] The Common Entrance Examination is written by 11- to 12-year-old primary school students. Passing the examination qualifies the student for a place in the First Form of a secondary school.

[3] Unpublished research findings, 1989.

[4] The average is based on yearly pass rates per subject.

[5] The Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) is a Caribbean based examination body which examines students at the end of their secondary education. At present the majority of subjects are examined at levels similar to the British ordinary level standards. In fact, CXC is an attempt to replace the British examinations system which existed in the Anglophone Caribbean.

[6] The average is based on yearly pass rates per subject.

[7] Caribbean Examinations Council, 1989.

[8] Educational Credit Foundation (FUNDAPEC), 1990. Statistics provided by the Statistics Department, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

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